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Short and Impartial

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*Mr. John Simson, Professor of
Divinity in the University of
Glasgow,*

As it comes before the GENERAL
ASSEMBLY 1729,

LETTER to a Gentleman, a Mem-
ber of the said Assembly.



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EDINBURGH, April 15. 1729.

*A short and impartial State of the
Case of Mr. John Simson, &c.*

S I R,

IT was a great Satisfaction to me to hear from you, of the Testimony of their Respect to your Worth the Presbytery in whose Bounds you have your Residence had given you, in making Choice of you for one of their Representatives in the ensuing Assembly. The Importance of the Things which will probably be under the Consideration of that Assembly, together with your known Learning and good Sense, your Love of Truth and Justice, your great Understanding in the Scriptures, and Knowledge of the great Doctrines of Christianity, your Zeal for the Purity of these Doctrines, your inviolable Attachment to our happy Constitution in Church and State; and in fine, that Candour and Equity, which make so agreeable a Part of your Character,

must render this Choice very acceptable to all, who have the Happiness to know you ; as the Friendship you have for some Years honoured me with, renders it a particular Joy to me.

You are pleased to signify, that having been hitherto but a distant Spectator of what has past in the Affair of Professor *Simson*, you have not made so narrow an Enquiry into the State of that Affair, as you reckon your self obliged to make now, that you are like to be a Judge in it ; and desire my Assistance, in order to the forming a just and impartial View of it : Which I take as a fresh Testimony of your undeserved Esteem for me ; tho' I know it proceeds from no Disposition to take Things of that Nature upon Trust, even from one you are pleased to honour with the Title of a Friend ; and therefore I shall, with the Frankness that Character encourages me to, lay before you what to me appears a just State of that Matter, with that Candour which I incline always to speak and act with, and must also reckon my self more particularly obliged to, in Point of Prudence, where I know whatever I say will be impartially examined.

THERE being a large Account of what has past in that whole Affair published, and transmitted to Presbyteries, by Order of the last Assembly, I should have satisfied my self with
remitting

remitting you to that, did you not acquaint me, that your having seen some Pamphlets that are handed about, which seem to give unfavourable Impressions of Mr. *Simson's* Case, makes you the more desirous, to know not only Facts, but my Judgment and Opinion about them, with the Reasons of it. Were I to imitate the Art of some other Papers I have seen on this Affair, I should usher in what I am to say on this Head, with some Protestations, to confirm my Sincerity, declaring, that I was of quite another Opinion concerning this Gentleman, than I am now of, till overbearing Evidence brought me over; which I apprehend I might do with equal Truth and Justice as some Authors I have seen: But as I am sensible, that by so doing, I should act but a sneaking Part, unworthy of the good Opinion you are pleased to have of me, so I should cast an injurious Imputation upon myself. 'Tis both against my Conscience and Inclination, to take up or entertain Suspicions of any Man, without just Grounds; and upon hearing bad Reports of any Man, I think myself obliged to suspend my Judgment, till I have duly and carefully enquired into the Grounds of them, with all the Aversion and Backwardness to believe these Reports, which belong to that *Charity that thinketh no Evil*.

I shall therefore only say, what I'm satisfied you'll

you'll easily believe me in, that as I have no personal Prejudice against Mr. *Simson*, so I have none in his Favours; and have nothing, that I know of, to influence me in this Matter, but my impartial Opinion of the Cause it self. This I believe will be yet more evident to you, by my laying before you the Facts I ground my Judgment in this whole Affair upon, with my Observations upon them, in such an Order, as to give you a clear and plain View, how I have come to form that Judgment. To which I shall proceed, after laying down a *Postulatum* or two, which I think needful to premise, namely,

First, THAT in forming a Judgment of Mr. *Simson's* Case, we are to act according to that golden Rule of Justice and Equity, *Whatsoever Things ye would, &c.* This is a sacred Rule of Righteousness fix'd, not only by its natural Equity and Reasonableness, but by the Authority of that GOD and Saviour, whose Glory and Honour we profess to be concerned for in the present Case: And therefore, if we would shew, that our Regard to His Glory and Honour, is unfeigned and sincere, and would act in this Matter, with that Wisdom and Zeal, which is *without Partiality and without Hypocrisy*, we must observe a strict Regard to this sacred Rule in the present Case. Let every Man lay his Hand to his own Breast, and make the Case of Mr. *Simson*

his

his own, and think what Judgment concerning the Matter he could in that Case allow to be fair, equitable and just; what Candor and what charitable Allowances he would think he might reasonably expect, and so let him act and judge in this Case. But further,

2dly, I premise, that in this Case we are to judge according to the Rules of Charity. The very Mention of this may perhaps prove startling to some, who make so little Account of *Charity*, as many do now a-days, and are even ready to make it a Mark of a Heretick, or Favourer of Heresy, that one cries up Charity: But I believe, Sir, you'll readily agree with me, that it is one of the most flagrant Signs of the Decay of real and vital Religion among us, that Charity is so little accounted of, and its Rules so little followed, and so grossly and notoriously transgressed. Indeed many, who make no small Pretences to Religion, seem to have forgot, that there is such a Word in their Bible, as that *Charity thinketh no Evil*; or else to have forgot the other Things the Apostle says in that Chapter, 1 Cor. xiii. concerning the Worth and Necessity of that Charity, and its Importance in Christianity. *Charity thinketh no Evil*, or doth not *impute* Evil to any, doth not charge it upon any without evident Ground; but in all dubious Cases, in all Cases that will admit of a Construction either Way, is ready to put the best and

and most favourable Construction on Mens Words and Actions. By this Rule, in the present Case, if any of the Professor's Words or Expressions, or any Piece of his Conduct, which may be reckoned to bear an ill Construction, will also bear a good one ; we ought not to put the ill Construction upon them : Nor are we to put the hardest Constructions and worst Interpretations on any thing said or done by him, if it will bear softer and more favourable ones.

3^{dly}, I premise, that in forming our Judgment in this Matter, we are to leave Room for these Allowances which are commonly, and in Candour and Equity, given to Pannels, pleading in their own Defence against a Libel or Accusation. I believe 'tis commonly allowed, that a Defender in such Cases has a Liberty to argue against both the Relevancy and the Proof of any Article exhibited against him, as far as he can ; (it being the Judges Business to determine how far his Arguings are just) and that every thing rashly or unadvisedly dropt in Pleadings of that sort, and in these Circumstances, is not to be improved against him, or made the Matter of a new Accusation ; far less are we to infer, what Opinion one would have about a Question, were he a Judge, from his Arguings upon it, when he is a Pannel ; And all this Allowance to Pannels I think
Candour

Candour and Equiry requirés, and therefore I must own I think it exceeding hard and injurious, in any Case, to argue thus, " Such a Man pleads in his Defences, that the Crime or Error libelled is not relevant; therefore he is guilty of that Crime or Error, or allows and approves of it; or, therefore, in his Opinion, 'tis no Crime." I shall not say, but that Pannels, in pleading against the Relevancy of any Crime or Error laid to their Charge, may go too far, and may be guilty of imprudent Steps or unjustifiable Conduct; but I think great Forbearance is to be exercised towards them in such Circumstances. I will not undertake altogether to justify every thing that the best and soundest Man, and the freest of the Crimes and Errors he is charged with, may say or do, when under the Rankling and Provocation of a Method of Inquisition used with him, or when fretted by uncharitable and endless Sulpicions concerning his Sincerity and Ingenuity. *Vid. State of the Process, p 216 § 3. &c.* But I think, that in Equity and Candour, great Allowance is to be made for harsh or ill sounding Expressions a Man may drop, for his making long and distant Defences, and not shewing all the Readiness to give Satisfaction which he might do, and otherwise would, when he is under such Treatment. These Things, Sir, I thought fit to

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premise

premise to the Account I am now to give you of those Facts upon which my Judgment in the Professor's Affair is founded, as containing the Rules I thought my self obliged to walk by, in forming that Judgment.

I shall now proceed to lay before you a fair State of the Matters of Fact themselves, with a few Observations upon them, which I think, according to the preceeding Rules, do justly and naturally arise from them.

AND *First*, I shall set before you the Account of what the Assemblies 1727 and 1728 have found relevant and proven against the Professor, which please take from the Summary of the Assembly's Proceedings drawn up by their Order, contained in p. 46. &c. of the *Proceedings of Assembly 1728*, as follows ; “ 1st, The Professor's denying
“ the Necessary-existence of our Lord Jesus
“ Christ, in teaching his Students. 2^{dly},
“ His teaching his Scholars, that the Ne-
“ cessary-existence of our Lord Jesus Christ
“ was a Thing we know not. 3^{dly}, His
“ teaching, that these Terms, *Necessary-*
“ *existence* and *Independency* were imperti-
“ nent, and not to be used in talking of the
“ Trinity. 4^{thly}, His teaching as his own
“ Opinion, that the Three Persons of the
“ Trinity are not to be said to be numeri-
“ cally One in Substance or Essence. 5^{thly},
“ His teaching or venting, that the Terms,
“ *Ne-*

“ *Necessary-existence, Supreme Deity, and*
 “ the Title of the *Only true GOD*, may
 “ be taken, and are by some Authors taken
 “ in a Sense that includes the *personal Pro-*
 “ *perty* of the Father, and so not belonging
 “ to the Son ; and that though he said, that
 “ *Necessary-existence, Supreme Deity, and*
 “ the Title of the *Only true GOD*, might
 “ belong to the Son, in such a Sense as in-
 “ cluded not the *personal Property* of the
 “ Father, yet he told not what that Sense
 “ was ; but without doing so, he inculcated
 “ the foresaid Distinction as a Caution that
 “ might be necessary for Students, in read-
 “ ing both ancient and modern Authors,
 “ whether Friends or Adversaries to the
 “ Truth.”

THESE, Sir, being all the Things which
 the two preceeding Assemblies have found
 relevant and proven against the Professor :
 Please next to take a fair Account of the
 Professor's Assertions and Declarations of his
 own Mind with respect to these Heads, to-
 gether with what he has offered for excul-
 pating himself from the erroneous Tenets
 which may be supposed to be included in
 these Things found relevant and proven,
 and which, though the preceeding Assem-
 blies have not found relevant altogether to
 exculpate him, they have yet reserved to be
 considered as Alleviations. And the last Af-

sembly not having had Time to undertake the Consideration of them in this View, I conceive they are the chief Things reserved to be considered by Members of the ensuing Assembly.

THE Professor in his first Letter to the Presbytery of *Glasgow* declares, (*State*, p. 17. at the Foot, and 19.) " That he
 " thinks it evident that the Son and Holy
 " Ghost must needs be One God with the
 " Father — And that in his teaching he
 " refuted all the Branches of the *Arian*
 " Heresy, condemned in the *Nicene* Creed,
 " and confirmed the Truth of the Catholick
 " Doctrine opposed thereunto," (among
 which Branches there are these, that the
 λογος is τρεπτος ἢ αλλοιωτος, *convertible*,
changeable, or *mutable*; the Meaning of
 which, and their Opposition to the Necess-
 sary-existence of CHRIST, I need not insist
 on explaining to you) And p. 19 and 20.
 " That if *Independent* and *Necessarily-*
 " *existent* be said of the Son in *any* Sense
 " consistent with the *personal Properties*
 " of the Father and the Son, they will no
 " doubt agree to him."

IN his Representation to the Reverend
 Presbytery, he declares, (*State*, p. 71. § 2.)
 " That one Substance in Number (meaning
 " Divine Substance) being absolutely im-
 " mense, in his Opinion, is common to all
 " the

“ the Persons of the Trinity.” And § 3.
 “ he says, “ I am surpris’d that many still
 “ entertain Suspensions, as if I did not own
 “ the Son of GOD to be a *Necessary Be-*
 “ *ing*, although I have declared in my Let-
 “ ter and Answers, That He is One GOD
 “ with the Father, and *as the Father hath*
 “ *Life in himself, so hath he given to the*
 “ *Son to have Life in himself*; that is, *He*
 “ *is infinite, eternal and unchangeable in*
 “ *his Being, Wisdom, Power, Holiness,*
 “ *Justice, Goodness,* and other Divine Per-
 “ fections, manifested by his creating and
 “ governing the World; which, in my O-
 “ pinion, do sufficiently prove him to be a
 “ *Necessary Being* to any Person that has
 “ not a mind to cavil, as it satisfies me
 “ thereof; which Arguments do also equal-
 “ ly prove his *Essential Independency,*
 “ *Self-existence,* and *true Godhead*, where-
 “ by he is oppos’d to all false Gods whatso-
 “ ever, as is GOD the Father, and in that
 “ Sense is, together with him, the *most*
 “ *high GOD*, and only true GOD. A-
 “ gain, in a Paper, entituled, *Objections*
 “ *against the Form of the Libel*, (State,
 “ p. 81. § 3. 5thly) there are some Ex-
 “ pressions said to be uttered by the Defen-
 “ dant, which are both contrary to his fix-
 “ ed Opinion, and what he fully taught on
 “ these Subjects; and as he remembers not
 “ his

" his having uttered such Expressions, he is
 " perswaded that such Alledgeances must
 " either flow from a Mistake of some of the
 " Hearers, or else from a Trip in his Ex-
 " pressions, mentioning one Word for an-
 " other. (§ following) Of this sort is that
 " Instance, that he said, That Professor
 " *Mark's* Argument against the Eternity of
 " the World, viz. *That if eternal, it must*
 " *be Necessarily-existent, was not good,*
 " because *Christus est eternus, sed non ens*
 " *necessarium* — And he is perswaded,
 " that if any of his Hearers alledge, that he
 " said, *Christus est eternus, sed non ens*
 " *necessarium*, that either he has mistaken
 " the Word *Christus* for *mundus*, or that
 " by a Trip in Expression, the Defendant
 " has said *Christus* for *mundus*, which he
 " is not sensible he did, the Word *Christus*
 " being plainly impertinent to the Argu-
 " ment he was then upon." Again, in An-
 swers and Defences, &c. (*State*, p. 88. § 2.
adly.) he speaks more largely to the same
 purpose.

THE particular Grounds of Exculpation
 given in by him (*State*, p. 108, 109.) are
 these; " 1st, His *teaching usually*, and
 " within the Time contained in the Libel,
 " as his own Judgment, and recommending
 " as *Gospel Truth*, the *express Words* of
 " *the Confession of Faith*, opposed to the
 " Articles

“ Articles charged in the Libel, viz. He
 “ taught that our *Blessed Lord Jesus*
 “ *Christ the Son of GOD*; the Second
 “ Person of the most glorious and adorable
 “ *Trinity, is very and eternal GOD, &c.*

“ 2dly, His teaching the *Equality* of
 “ the Son with the Father, and shewing that
 “ he had Life in himself, as the Father had;
 “ that is, that he was *infinite, eternal and*
 “ *unchangeable in his Being, &c.*

“ 3dly, His refuting the several Branch-
 “ es of the *Arian* Heresy; namely, That
 “ the Son of GOD is created or made out
 “ of nothing; That there was a Time when
 “ he was not; That he was a changeable
 “ and precarious Being, and the like. In
 “ Opposition to which he taught, That the
 “ glorious Son of GOD was neither crea-
 “ ted nor made, but was the only begotten
 “ Son of GOD, eternally begotten of Him,
 “ without any Beginning of his Duration,
 “ of one Substance with the Father, endued
 “ with the same essential infinite Perfe-
 “ ctions with him, which he has manifest-
 “ ed by his creating all Things in Heaven
 “ and Earth, visible and invisible, &c.
 “ and upholding all Things by the Word of
 “ his Power; which declares him to be by
 “ Nature infinitely above all created, pre-
 “ carious and contingent Beings whatso-
 “ ever, as is GOD the Father, with
 “ whom

whom the Son and Holy Ghost are One God, tho' distinct Persons from him, being distinguished by their personal Properties." All which Particulars are fully prov'd; only in the Proof of the last Article, all the several Expressions in which the Professor alledges he confuted the several Branches of the *Arian* Heresy, are not condescended upon by concurring Witnesses. But I may leave it to you (upon viewing the Proof as it is summ'd up, *State* p. 154, 155, 156.) to judge if there are not Expressions enough so condescended upon, to shew plainly that the Professor was then *confuting* any who deny the Necessary-existence of the second Person of the glorious Trinity; or the numerical Unity of Substance in the Three Persons; as that the Son *is not a changeable Being*, *is idem ens cum Patre*; or, *the same Being with the Father*, *infinitely above Creatures*; *Deus naturâ*, &c. His Declaration given in to the Assembly 1727 (p. 187.) is in these Words, " Professor *Simson* humbly offers to the Venerable Assembly, " for his Vindication, his Sentiments upon " the Subject of the Articles of the Libel " against him, that have been found relevant by the Assembly. 1st, That Christ " is *necessarily-existent* in the common " and ordinary Sense of that Word, as it " signifies an Impossibility not to have been; " which

“ which is one of the *essential Perfections*
 “ of the Divine Nature, that are equally
 “ common to all the three Persons.”

“ 2^{dly}, THAT Independency is to be affir-
 “ med of the Son of GOD, as it signifies an
 “ essential Perfection of his Divine Nature,
 “ which is equally common to all the Per-
 “ sons of the Trinity.”

“ 3^{dly}, THAT the Three Persons of the
 “ Trinity are of one Substance in Number;
 “ not taken in such a Sense, as that Phrase
 “ is in common Use applied to Creatures,
 “ which restricts it to one Person, but in a
 “ Sense importing the strictest Unity of the
 “ Godhead, in Opposition to a Plurality of
 “ Gods, yet consistently with their being
 “ Three Persons, in Opposition to One Per-
 “ son.”

IN his Speech to the General Assembly,
 May 7th 1728, he asserts the essential ne-
 cessary Existence of the Son of GOD, and
 explains it thus, (*Proceed. of Ass. 1718,*
p. 301) “ That he is infinite and unchange-
 “ able in his Being, Wisdom, Power, and
 “ other Divine Perfections; which evident-
 “ ly contradicts the *Arian* and *Socinian*
 “ Errors of the Son's being a finite, created,
 “ and contingent, changeable Being, or a vo-
 “ luntary Production; and ascribes to the
 “ second Person of the *Blessed Trinity*, GOD
 “ the Son, the same Necessity of Existence

“ which belongs to GOD alone, *viz.* That
 “ he always was, is, and must be the same
 “ invariably, which is the true Import of
 “ the Names, *JEHOVAH* and *I AM*,
 “ that are given to our LORD in Scripture:
 “ Which Names were alledged by several
 “ Members of the Committee, to be the
 “ Scripture Expressions, containing their
 “ Meaning of the Word, *Necessary-exi-*
 “ *stence*; wherein I then fully agreed with
 “ them, as I hope they will do with me
 “ now: And I have always taught, That
 “ the Names *JEHOVAH* and *I AM*
 “ do truly belong to the Son.”

N. B. This is a Repetition of what he
 had declared to the Committee *March 15th*
 before.

In fine I need not repeat to you at large his
 Declarations made and given in to the last
 Assembly, found by them to be sound and or-
 thodox, where he asserts the Necessity of the
 Existence and Generation of the Person of
 our Lord Jesus Christ.— Also he declares,
 “ That the Titles *summus Deus*, and the
 “ *only true GOD*, are equally applicable
 “ to the Father and the Son, and not in any
 “ lower Sense to the Son than to the Father.”
 Likewise he affirms, *That the three Per-*
sons in the Godhead are one Substance or
Essence in Number. With these Declarati-
 ons of the Professor's Sentiments upon the
 Matter

Matter of the Propositions abovementioned, as found relevant and proven, let me join a short View of what is or may be alledged by him, or for him, as to the Point how far these Propositions so proven, can infer him guilty.

IN general I must observe, That it not having been alledged against the Professor, that he had uttered the offensive Words or Propositions mentioned oftner than once, a Proof that he had once uttered them would afford no sufficient Evidence to fix upon him the erroneous Opinions that may be imported in them: And therefore, as the Assembly have not, so I think they could not find it proven by the Evidence they had before them, that he had deliberately and designedly taught the Errors included in these Expressions, as his own Opinions, but only that he had been guilty (whether rashly, by Trip or otherwise, they have not determined) of uttering or emitting Words that had a bad Tendency, however contrary that Tendency might be to his Design. This, Sir, is of the greater Weight, if it is true, as I am inform'd, that the Professor insisted for the express Judgment of the last Assembly upon this Question, 'Whether it appears to them upon the whole ' Proof and Evidence before them, that he ' is guilty of having deliberately held, entertained and taught, as his own Opinion,

' that the Glorious Son of God is not *neces-*
 ' *sarily existent* in the most common and or-
 ' dinary Sense of these Words, or if he is not
 ' guilty' ? And yet the Assembly, without
 giving any such Judgment, do in their Act
 upon the Whole, only find his having taught
 and uttered such Things, and expressed him-
 self in such Terms as are *Subversive*, ———
 and *tend*, &c. Words which do not express
 an *Intention* of the Speaker sound by them,
 but only a *Tendency* of the Words he used,
 which in the Case of fallible Men, may oft-
 times be contrary to the Design of the
 Speaker in using them. I know it will be
 said. How can we know Mens Designs but
 by their overt Acts or Words ? yet I think
 we may judge what overt Acts bewray a
 deliberate Intention, and what not ; and,
 when it is evident on the contrary, that
 there was no such Intention, or at least the
 Circumstances of the Case afford strong
 Grounds for a charitable Presumption there
 was not. And that it is so in the present
 Case, will further appear to you by the par-
 ticular Observations to be made. And first,
 as to the first Article found relevant and pro-
 ven as above, give me leave without any Re-
 flections, to put you in Mind as to the Mat-
 ter of Fact how the Proof stands. It is con-
 tained in the Depositions of Three only of
 Thirty Witnesses, *viz.* 3d, 4th and 15th,
 and

and is deposed about 15 Months after the Words should have been uttered ; and none of the three seem to be positive of the Professor's very Words. The first of them, *Boyd*, puts three Expressions, with Alternatives, and does not mind which of them the Professor used. The second, *Duncan*, is not positive the Words he delivers are the express Words the Professor uttered. The 3d, *Bar*, a very young raw Student, puts two Expressions, with the Alternative *seu*, as if the whole Alternative had been the Professor's Words. I can't but likewise observe, that the said Deponent pretending in the same Deposition to give the Professor's Latin Words in explaining *Mark*, (which I am told too he read off a Paper) delivers Words that are neither Latin nor Sense, a Thing which any who are acquainted with the Professor know he is not very liable to fall into. Upon this I shall make no Remark.

WITHALL the Professor has declared from the Beginning, that what was laid in the Libel against him upon this Head, was contrary to his fixed Mind ; so that if such Words should be deposed against him, they must be constructed to be either a Trip of his in speaking, or a Mistake in the Witnesses Hearing ; both which are possible, and are consistent both with the Professor's Soundness, and with

with the Integrity and Veracity of the Witnesses : But the last seems most probable, since of such a Number, only three remember to have heard Words of such a Nature as must have been startling to all who heard them. And this Declaration the Professor makes once and again before any Proof was taken upon this Article. I am surprised to find in Pag. 223. of the State, that Men of such a Character as some of the Members of the Sub-Committee of the Assembly 1727, should have reasoned, *That the Grossness of the Article it self would hardly allow any to think it was a meer Trip in Speech*: As if the very Grossness of an Error was a Ground of fixing it upon a Man, which rather according to the Rules of Charity should render us the more averse to impute it to him. And in the present Case it appears to me that the Thing was so gross, that it must have struck with Surprise, and made a deep Impression upon a great many who heard it, and so could hardly have slipped out of the Mind of them all but three.

THE second Article is of so near an Affinity with the former, that I need make no particular Observe upon it.

As to the 3d, For any Thing proved upon it, it may well bear the Interpretation, that he said these Terms were impertinent, and

and not to be used in talking of the personal Distinctions and Relations of the Persons of the Trinity, that it was impertinent, for Instance, thus to express the Distinction of the Father and the Son, that the Father is necessarily existent, but the Son is not ; that the Father is independent, and the Son is dependent, &c.

As to the 4th, It has never been found proven, that he used the Expressions of *the Three Persons not being numerically one in Substance or Essence alone*, but always with such Additions as might plainly show, that however he apprehended numerical Unity of Substance was so defined by *Aristotle*, (whether justly or not, is but a Difference about the Meaning of *Aristotle's* Words, and not about a Point of Divinity) as not to agree to the Unity of an Essence or Substance, in which there are three distinct Persons, yet he never intended to deny that the three Persons of the Godhead are of one Substance or Essence in Number, in a Sense consistent with the Distinction of the Persons. In a Word, he only intended to deny that they are *One Person in Number*.

As to the fifth, I cannot think that in the first Part of it it is found that the Terms mentioned might rightly be so taken ; for this as he always denied it, so it was never proven, but only that they might in Fact ;
which

which is confirmed by his adding, *That they were so by some Authors*. And this, if it is any Error, can be only a Mistake of Fact, and no Error in Doctrine. The only Thing then I can take to be found blameable in this 5th Article, is the Omission mentioned in the last part of it: As to which one must in Justice and Candour be reckoned to exculpate himself from any Crime, or at least to amend any Fault that can be supposed to be in it, when he supplies that Omission, as the Professor has done in the present Case, several Times in the Course of his Declarations.

To conclude this Head, the Professor's own Declarations of his Mind upon the several Points found relevant and proven, appear to me to be very plain and strong; and particularly his Explications of his Mind upon the Head of the Necessary-existence of the Son (both in his first Letter to the Presbytery, where he declares him to be *infinite, eternal, and unchangeable*, &c. and in his Speech to the General Assembly 1728) do as strongly and more clearly express the Doctrine design'd to be express'd by that Term, and are more free from Ambiguity, than either the Term *Necessary-existence*, or the Phrase, *Impossible not to have been*; so that, altho' the Professor may sometimes have charged that Term, or that Phrase with Ambiguity; this can be no just Exception against

gainst the Validity of his Declarations of the Doctrine exprest by these Terms, given in Words, which must be confessed free from all Ambiguity and not liable to Mistake. Again, the Professor's sound Declarations, especially on the important Head of the necessary Existence of the Son, are frequently repeated, and run in a Train and Suit from the Beginning to the End of the Process; so that I cannot see with what Justice his last Declarations to the Assembly can be disregarded as coming too late, considering that his later Declarations are not contradictory, but agreeable to, and consistent with his former Declarations, only that they come in one after another as further Expli- cations of his Meaning, as he found or apprehended it was mistaken, or that the pre- ceding Declarations were not fully satisfy- ing (*vide his Speech to Ass. May 7. 1728. § 3. initio, his first Paper, May 14. p. m. initio, and his Paper, May 15. a. m. initio*) In fine, He renounces and disclaims any Terms, Expressions or Ways of speaking that are contrary unto, or inconsistent with the Propositions which the Assembly has found sound and orthodox; and is exceed- ing sorry that he has given any Offence to his Reverend Brethren, or any Member of this Assembly, or of the Church of Scot- land, by his Way of expressing himself upon

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the Subject of these Propositions. And further represents, That he is heartily sorry, that he should have used any Ways of expressing himself in his Papers or otherwise, that have given Occasion of Offence, or Suspicion of his Soundness in the Faith, or that might any Way tend to mislead others, tho' not intended by him: And he is ready to quit and renounce all such Ways of speaking that are thought dangerous or unsafe.

I cannot therefore conceive what some mean by saying that his found Declarations do not contain any *Retraction* of his Errors; unless it be that he does not own he said what he cannot yet remember he ever said; does not acknowledge Errors his own Conscience does not charge him with; but which on the contrary he is conscious to himself were contrary to his fixed Opinion, at the very Time when he is alledged to have uttered them.

Upon the whole then, I take the true State of the Professor's Tenets, upon the Heads mentioned, as in a fair and impartial way of judging it may be gathered, by comparing together what the Assemblies have found relevant and proven against him, with his own Declarations, and the Exculpations alledged and proved by him, to be plainly this: 1st, He owns it is his Opinion, That

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the Three Persons of the Trinity are properly Three intelligent Agents ; but yet they are not Three distinct Substances, but are of One undivided numerical Essence or Substance ; provided this last be not understood in the Sense of One Person, or of the *μονοψυχιον*. which was the Characteristick of the *Sabellians*. 2^{dly}, That the Second and Third Persons are not absolutely and in *all* Senses, OF NONE ; that being the personal Property of the Father : But the Son is eternally begotten of the Father, and the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son : Yet the Son is not from the Father, any more than the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son, by a free Act of the Father's Will, but naturally and necessarily ; so as all the Three Persons are equally necessarily-existent. Or, as the same Doctrine is express'd by the Professor in other Words : They are *infinite, eternal and unchangeable, &c.* and that the Son, in particular, always was, is, and ever must be the same invariably, &c. these being essential Perfections of God, and each of the Persons being *true and eternal God*, according to the Professor's constant and repeted Declarations. 3^{dly}, Tho' he apprehended that the Terms, *Necessary-existence, &c.* might in fact be, and were by some Authors understood of the Father's personal Property,

(and if he should think so still, it is but an Error about a Matter of Fact, if it is so much ;) yet he does not approve of their being so taken or understood; nor does it appear that he ever did.

I believe now, Sir, it will be evident to you, that there is no just Ground to suspect the Professor of holding, or having ever held the gross Errors, supposed by many to be included in, and understood by what is found relevant and proven against him, *viz.* “ That the Son and Holy Ghost are quite distinct Beings, of a different Nature and Essence from the Father, and produced by a free Act of his Will: So that whatever Perfections they are possess’d of, they have them *precariously, dependently* and *mutably.*” So that by a View of the whole of this Affair, you, or any impartial Man may easily judge, how little Shadow of Ground there is for that most injurious Outcry against the Professor, *That he has denied the Godhead of Christ, or degraded him into the Rank of Creatures:* Which is the summary View that some, with great Confidence, take it upon them to give us of what is proved against him.

You’ll perhaps then ask me, What are the Crimes the Professor is found guilty of? Why, Sir, you have them summ’d up in the Act of the last Assembly. In short, he is found

found guilty of having used Words and Expressions, (*rashly* and *unadvisedly*, as I think I have now made it evident) which have a bad Tendency; Tho' I think it is likewise now clear, that the bad Tendency of these Expressions has not been the Intention of the Speaker. He has also been found guilty of some Steps of wrong Conduct; particularly, of neglecting Opportunities of giving Satisfaction to the Judicatories of the Church, as to the Soundness of his Faith. And I own it is my Judgment, That however the putting of Queries to him concerning his private Thoughts, especially if this was understood to be done under a Penalty, upon his Refusal to answer these Queries, was a Method unjust and inquisitory; yet he might, under a Protest that his doing so should be construed no Approbation of that Method, have taken that Opportunity to clear himself of the Errors of which he was, tho' without just Ground, suspected: And I think he was to blame for not doing so.

This being a just and fair Account of the Crimes the Professor is found guilty of, I may leave it to you, Sir, or any impartial Man to judge, if he has not suffered already sufficient Censure for them; especially if we consider the Load of Calumny, and the opprobrious Names he has suffered from many, besides the Sentence inflicted upon him by

by the Judicatories of the Church; and whether the Censure he lies under, ought not now to be taken off; according to the Ends of Discipline, and that Tenderness and Charity towards a Brother *overtaken in a Fault*, *Gal. 6. 1.* which should accom. any the Exercise of it, since it ought always to be exercised for Edification and not for Destruction, *2 Cor. 2. 7.* Considering withall, that in so far as he has been an Offender, he is far from being an obstinate, but is a penitent Offender. He has continued now for a Year under the last Sentence of Suspension; and I have never heard of any Thing in his Profession or Behaviour during that Time disagreeable to his Professions of Soundness, and of Sorrow for his Offence which he made to that Assembly; nor of any new Crime he has been guilty of, to deserve either his being laid under a higher Censure, or having the present Censure any longer continued: On the contrary, his Behaviour gives abundant Ground to hope, that his future Conduct shall be always humble and watchful, and suitable to these Declarations he has made; and that his after-Labours; upon his being restored to the Exercise of his Ecclesiastical Function, shall be very useful to the Church, and edifying to those to whom he has given Offence, and shall make some considerable Reparation for the Offence he has given.

You

You will I doubt not now be surprized,
 at the great Heat that has been shown by
 many in this Affair, and the injurious Re-
 presentations that have been given of the Pro-
 fessor's Case, and may perhaps wonder how
 it has come about, that he has been pushed
 at by some of his Brethren in *Glasgow*,
 with so much Keeness, and that such pas-
 sionate Misrepresentations have been given :
 As to this, I could perhaps tell you a Histo-
 ry, made up partly of notour Facts, and
 partly of probable Conjectures ; but I don't
 care to enter on such a Work. — But
 you know, Sir, the Spirit of Jealousy a-
 gainst a Man is very easily raised, and not
 so easily laid, especially upon a Subject a-
 bout which there has been so much Noise of
 late in other Parts of the World, not far
 from us. I plainly perceive, that the Pro-
 fessor has not been duly aware, what Im-
 provement would readily be made, of his
 making long and formal Defences on such a
 Head, and in such Circumstances ; instead of
 taking the very first Opportunities of clear-
 ing himself, as far as he could, even tho'
 these Opportunities were cast up to him, by
 such Methods of dealing with him, as were
 grievous and hard upon him, and as I think
 cannot be justified. However it were to be
 wished indeed, that less Noise had been made
 about this Affair ; that it had been handled
 with

with less Heat and Passion; and that there had not been so much Pains taken, to alarm the Minds of simple and well-meaning People, and to raise their Passions about an Affair of that Intricacy, that it is to be feared their Knowledge and Understanding have little Hand in raising the Zeal they have been made to conceive about it; and in fine, that there had not been such unjustifiable Means used, to bring about such Overtures from Presbyteries about this Matter, as might have a Tendency to over-aw the Members of the ensuing Assembly, whose Judgment about it might incline them to be favourable to the Professor: For this Purpose a great Deal of Industry has been used, no Pains have been spared by some, very indirect Methods have been taken, and a great Deal of Heat and Passion has been shown. I have the Honour to be sufficiently known to you, Sir, not to be suspected by you of Partiality, when I say that most, if not all of this Management, has been on the Side of those who are zealous for condemning the Professor, and inflicting the Censure of Deposition upon him: And tho' I was not thus known to you, I can vouch this sufficiently, to remove any such Suspicion. I might appeal to all impartial Witnesses of the Pleadings in the several Presbyteries upon this Affair, whether these who were for assailing the Pro-

Professor, or at least for inflicting upon him no higher Censure than the last Assembly had done, did not manage the Matter in a Way of calm Reasoning and Argument? while many on the other Side discovered a vast Deal of that *Wrath of Man*, which *worketh not the Righteousness of GOD*; made the most odious and invidious Insinuations, as if their Brethren, who were not for condemning the Professor (meerly because they could not find it evident, that he was guilty of these Errors the others reckoned him guilty of) were patronizing and defending those Errors, were deserting the Cause of CHRIST; or at least were cool and indifferent in that Cause: So that had By-standers been to judge by their Representation of the Matter, they would have taken the Question betwixt them and their Brethren to be, "Whether
 " we were bound to have a strong and pre-
 " vailing Concern for the Honour of our
 " Lord *Jesus*, and the Glory of his God-
 " head. or not? and not " Whether Mr.
 " *Simson* was guilty of the Errors with
 " which he was charged or not?" Were
 not Arguments upon the Cause, and even a-
 bout Matter of Fact, answered by threatening
 Insinuations of deserting the Ministry of
 those who pled on that Side, and withdraw-
 ing People from their Attendance upon it?
 Again, Sir, you know what Pamphlets have
 E been

been published, with Design to give an unfavourable Representation of the Professor's Case ; and I know of none yet on the other Side. It would be an Affront to one of your Candor and Judgment, to take particular Notice in what Manner these Pamphlets are written ; how stuff with Noise and Clamour, groundless and false Assertions and Insinuations, injurious not only to the Ministers and Members of this Church (as, that *Severals of them have OPENLY DENIED the Divinity of CHRIST*) but also to the late Venerable Assembly, and to our gracious Sovereign, and his mild and equitable Administration : And in fine, what Hints are given to People to take their Marks by the Part Ministers act in this Cause, to *take heed whom they hear* ?

HOWEVER honest and innocent the Intentions of the last Assembly might be, in ordering the Procees to be transmitted to the several Presbyteries, it has already had very unhappy Effects, and such as are threatening of other Evils. One is, that we may expect in the next Assembly very various, and even contradictory Opinions about this Affair, from different Presbyteries, which what Consequences it may have upon the Peace of this Church, especially considering the Temper and Spirit many are of with respect to this Affair, 'tis to be feared a little Time may

may give a melancholy Discovery of, considering also what Occasion has been taken already from this by some, to spread a Flame throughout the whole Country, which I fear will not be so easily quenched.

ANOTHER unhappy Consequence of this Reference is, That Persons have been brought in to give their Opinion and Judgment in Presbyteries, about Things of which they had little or no Understanding; and even, by their Numbers, to over-rule the Judgment of others who were qualified, and at Pains fully to understand the Matter. You know very well, Sir, that my Principles are intirely favourable to the Right of such Officers in the Church as Ruling Elders, and their Title to sit and judge in our Ecclesiastical Judicatories: Were I of another Opinion in this Matter, I could not have the Confidence to make this Application to one of your Character; I indeed look upon their Share of the Discipline and Government of this Church (if they take care to use it aright, and with Discretion) to be a great Bulwark and Security of the Christian People; and it is my fixed Opinion, that their Right of Judging and Voting in all Causes that come before Church Judicatories, is as extensive as the Capacities they have of Judging, arising either from the natural Abilities, or from the Improvements of Education, or

from the ordinary Aids of Divine Grace (which are all that the best and wisest of them will pretend to) are: And therefore I think they are not to be excluded from judging in Points of Doctrine, according to their Capacity and Ability; and I know many of them are very capable of doing it, in the most nice and intricate Points. But I am periwaded, Sir, a Person of your good Sense will also agree with me; that no Man can have a Divine Right to what, through the Defect either of his natural Parts, or of his Education, he is under a natural Incapacity of, unless that natural Incapacity be supernaturally supplied, which I believe at the same time you will own is not common now-a-days, and therefore is not to be presumed or proceeded upon without extraordinary Evidence. And that this is the Case of many of those illiterate, though pious, Persons we are obliged to have for Ruling Elders, in many Places, with respect to judging of several Points in the Affair now under Consideration, is I think too obvious to bear a Dispute. Some may perhaps sport themselves, and endeavour to amuse and to cast a Blind upon others, by adducing in the Case before us such Scripture-Expressions as that the Children of GOD *shall be all taught of GOD*, and that the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven are *revealed even to Babes*.

[Alarm]

[*Alarm*, p. 18.] But we may appeal to the Consciences of Men of Sincerity and Understanding; if they can think that such Expressions import a Promise, that God will give all illiterate pious Christians, in a supernatural way, a Capacity of understanding the most Scholastick Terms in which the important Doctrines of Christianity may be expressed? And whether there is not a great Difference betwixt a serious Christian's being enabled, by the enlightning of the Spirit of God, in the due use of ordinary Means, to understand and know, and that in a saving way, the great and important Doctrines of the Gospel, the Knowledge of which is necessary to Salvation, so as to fall into no fatal or dangerous Mistake about them; and his being supernaturally enabled to understand the Meaning of all the Terms and Phrases in which learned Men may express these Doctrines? To understand, for Instance, the Meaning of the Words, *Numerical and Specifical Unity*, and the Difference betwixt these two, *Necessary-existence, Self-existence*, and *Independency*. and the Fitness or Propriety of the Use of these Words; and whether all, or any of them, are to be used or not in talking of the Trinity, or of any of the glorious Persons of the Godhead?

I have insisted the longer upon this, with a View to what has happened (as I am informed)

formed) in some Presbyteries; where not only young Ministers, against whom so great a Cry is now raised ('tis hard to say for what Reason) but Ministers venerable for their Age, as well as Piety, Learning, a Zeal for the Purity of the Doctrine and the other valuable Interests of this Church, that has a long Time stood the Proof, were out-voted, in giving the Judgment of their Presbytery about Mr. *Simson's* Case, by plain Countrymen, who, with all the Piety and Zeal in the World, could not, without Inspiration, know in many Cases what they were judging and voting about; and also with a View to the frequent Appeals that have been made to the People, from some Pulpits, and in some Pamphlets written with great Virulency and Bitterness, upon the Points of *Numerical* and *Specifical* Unity, *Necessary-existence*, &c. So that People have been induced to believe, that Mr. *Simson* had *denied the LORD that bought us*, and that all who took his part were supporting him in that Denial; and that by Conclusions and Inferences drawn from Words and Phrases, which to them are Greek and Hebrew. A Method by which those, who have thought it for their purpose to use such mean and base Arts of Calumny, know in their Consciences they might have as easily made People believe any thing they had pleased

pleased of him ; as I'm told, many of the Commonalty have by some Art or other been made to believe, that he maintains that *Women have no Souls*, and thence have conceived a violent Prejudice and Aversion against him. From such Methods as these, I shall plainly declare to you, Sir, let it be matter of Jest or Triumph to whom it will ; I dread the most dismal Consequences to this Church ; Consequences, the Fears of which give me many sad Thoughts of Heart : And however some who have an active Hand in such Things, may make light of the Matter now, or rejoyce in the Prospect of some of these Consequences ; yet perhaps it may be no Jest or Pleasure to them ere all is done, and they themselves may feel some of these Consequences heavy when they come to fall on themselves : And however such By-arts may serve a present Turn, yet as no honest Man is safe or secure from such Methods, so it is not the first Time that those who have used them, have themselves smarted for it, and have found in Experience, that *what is Sauce for a Goose is Sauce for a Gander* ; and thus have born the Fruits of their own Sin and Folly, and very justly, *Neque enim lex æquior ulla*, &c. But I need not insist longer to you on the Injustice of the Insinuations that have been made, and the injurious Constructions that have been put on the

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the Conduct of these Ministers who have discovered themselves to be against deposing the Professor, as if they had no due Concern for the Glory and Honour of our Blessed Lord JESUS, or were fallen from the Zeal of our godly Ancestors. Whatever Outcries are made against many of the present Ministry of this Church, I hope that Ministers who have long given Proof of their Piety and Soundness in the Faith, and even whole Presbyteries, are not yet so far degenerate, as that it will be any Question with them, whether he is not to be reckoned unworthy of the Character of a Christian, and far more of that of a Minister of CHRIST, who is not ready to testify his Zeal for the Honour and Glory of our blessed Redeemer by all lawful and proper Methods, such as alone they can expect shall be acceptable to him. I hope they all reckon themselves as *deep in Debt* (*Vid. Append. to Alarm, p. 3.*) to GOD the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, as a certain Author, who does not stick to vent Lies in this Cause, and afterwards justifies himself in so doing; though at the same time they dare not, upon Pretence of Zeal for the Honour of CHRIST, go into any injurious Measures, seeing this would be no better than *speaking wickedly for GOD, talking deceitfully for Him, and mocking Him*; and this it would be in them, if, contrary
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to their own Consciences, they should own Mr. *Simson* to be *guilty* of the gross Errors he is charged with; or, if not finding him guilty, they should go along to condemn him with those who do. Now how injurious is it, when the Difference betwixt Ministers at the Bottom of the Matter is really about what Crimes or Errors Mr. *Simson* is guilty of, and not what Censure he would deserve, if he were guilty: How injurious, I say, is it in this Case to put such a Construction on the Conduct of these who plead for him, as arises from the uncharitable Supposition, that they have still the same View of his Crime, as those who think he has denied the Godhead of CHRIST? How injurious would it be reckoned, if they on the other Side should, from the Supposition that their Brethren have the same Views they have of his Innocency, impute to them a wilful perverting of Justice, through Hatred of the Man, or some private or Party-pique? For my part, I have a better Opinion of their Honesty and Justice, than to impute to them such Wickedness, though I own I am not able to stretch this Charity to such (I hope they are no Ministers) as dare pretend to support so awful a Cause, and so dangerous to be touched with unhallowed Hands, as is the Glory and the Godhead of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, by the vile Arts of the Father of Lies, by uttering gross Falf-

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hoods

hoods, and such as are the most calumnious, reproachful and malicious, and have the most evident Tendency to raise Variance and Dissension, who offer to raise up the Zeal of People to contend for the Doctrine of the Divinity of CHRIST, telling them positively, and without the poor Salvo of a Hear-say. That this Doctrine is *openly denied* (*Alarm, p. 15.*) not only by Mr. *Simson*, but by other Members and Ministers of this Church, and can afterwards defend this; and think to clear it of the Guilt of Lying and Calumny, by telling us *they heard so*, (*App. p. 5.*) as if this was not the very way in which the *defaming of many* is heard, *Report*, say they, *and we will report it*, *Jer. xx. 10.* And forgetting that 'tis a Character of a true Citizen of *Zion*, that *he taketh not up a Reproach* against his Neighbour, *Pf. xv. 3.* Of a like Kidney with this, is the making Insinuations about the Conduct of His Majesty, which evidently tend to raise in the Minds of People a Jealousy of our gracious Sovereign, as is opposite to King JESUS (*Alarm p. 24.*) and then thinking to get off afterwards, by telling how loyal a Subject to His Majesty the Author is. "That indeed he "heard so, but he does not believe it, but that "he believes it was raised and spread by Mr. "*Simson's Friends*" (*App. p. 6.*) which I have good Ground to assert to be a Falshood, invented by his Enemies, else we should have

heard

heard of it otherwise than from this unknown Author, for whom I want a Name that is decent enough to use in a Letter to you.

WERE all who have had Impressions of Mr. *Simson*, and are for deposing him, of such a Stamp and Spirit as this, it were easy to see, which Side we might reasonably entertain the most favourable Presumptions of: For 'tis a natural and known Observation, that Argument fails and is wanting, where Clamour and Uproar are brought to supply the Place of it. But I am well satisfied, Sir, that all the Professor's Opponents are not of that Spirit.

HOWEVER all this Heat that has been discovered, and Noise that has been made, has been raised, and seems to have been intended, to muster up several Arguments for deposing the Professor, which are foreign to the Merits of the Cause: But if these are duly stated above, as I flatter my self I have been at some Pains to form a just and impartial View of them, those Arguments must have little Weight with any honest Man; and indeed they seem rather to be set up as Scar-crows, to deter People from suffering the Merits of the Cause it self to have great Weight in their Judgment and Determination about it, than for any other Purpose; so that I need not insist long upon them to you.

SOME talk much of the Offence that will be taken, if the Professor shall escape with-

out further Censure; but I think it is evident from what has been said, that in this Case the Offence will be *taken* only, and not *given*; and however the avoiding and guarding against Offence, is to be not only an additional Motive to what on other Accounts is our Duty, but also a Restraint on the Use of our Liberty, about Things otherwise indifferent, yet 'tis neither to be a Motive to do any Thing that's unjust, iniquous and sinful. Besides in the present Case, many seem to lay all the Stress of the Danger of Offence on one Side, whereas I have good Information to support me, in asserting, that our Church's proceeding further against Mr. *Simson*, or even continuing the Censure he now lyes under, upon the Grounds they have now before them, will be Matter of great Offence to the Generation of GOD's Children, to a great Body of pious, learned and orthodox Christians, throughout the whole Protestant Churches. In fine, it is to be considered, how these Impressions of Mr. *Simson*, and Prejudices against him have been raised, which are the great Grounds of the Offence that is likely to be taken in this Case. How vilely has the poor Gentleman been calumniated, and how grossly have well-meaning People been imposed upon, and of what pernicious Consequences may it be, if the General Assembly should do any Thing, that may seem to

favour

favour and encourage such Methods, or give the least Countenance to them, and humour Prejudices so raised. Would it not be rather worth their while, to take some effectual Methods to give a Check to such Things, and to open the Eyes of deluded People?

As for the Noise some make, of the Hazard of Divisions in this Church, and People's separating from their Ministers who have appeared for Mr. *Simson*; 'tis to be hoped the Danger of this will rather be lessened by the Assembly's going into a *favourable* Sentence, and at the same time showing to the World, upon what just and good Grounds they go into it. And what Shadow of Foundation can there be for Division or Separation in this Case, since it may easily be made evident to any who will receive Information, that the Ministers and Members of this Church, if they are judged to fall into any Mistake on that Side, commit only a Mistake in Fact, and on the charitable Side, which is both the safest and the honestest; and not such an Error as arises from any want of Zeal for Truth and the Purity of Doctrine. Besides, to the Praise of the honest People be it spoken, they have not yet shown so much of that unreasonable *giddy* and *factionous* Humour, notwithstanding all the Pains that have been taken to raise it, as some People seem to wish they had. Again, is there no Hazard of Division on
the

the other Side? Can it be thought, that an Act of Assembly deposing the Professor, will clear the Minds and Consciences of Ministers and Presbyteries who think such a Sentence unjust? Must not they then in consequence of such an Act, expect to be violently push'd at by such as have already discovered so much Heat and Violence, not only against the Professor, but against all who take his part, as they express it? And tho' some of these should ly by at last, can it be expected this will save them from the Effects of that Heat and Jealousy that has been already rais'd against them? In the other Case, there can be no such Danger, seeing no such Heat and Jealousy has been entertain'd or discovered on the other Side.

As to the artful Use that is made of those sacred Things, *The Glory of our blessed Lord Jesus, and the Honour of his God-head*, to procure a Sentence of Deposition against the Professor: If such Arguments are thrown up, in stead of an Answer to the View of his Case I have given, as it stands in Fact, upon which my Argument for a favourable Sentence is entirely founded; give me leave to reply to it, That it is dangerous playing with Edge-Tools, and that *Christ* the most High God will not be mocked; for, what better is it than a mocking of him to argue thus: "Tho' it does not appear by any overt Act, that the Professor has
" had

“ had the least Design to derogate from the
 “ Glory and Honour of the Lord *Jesus* ;
 “ tho’ he is not guilty of a Crime deserving
 “ Deposition ; tho’ it is unjust to inflict
 “ such a Sentence upon him : Yet, out of
 “ Zeal for the Honour and Glory of *Christ*,
 “ let us depose him ?

SOME are very forward to alarm us, with
 an Apprehension of the great Danger of let-
 ting the Professor go, as they express it ; but
 is there no Danger in dealing too harshly and
 severely with a Man ? I should think it in ge-
 neral far more safe, as well as more honest, to
 follow Measures by which some guilty Persons
 may escape, than to sacrifice one innocent
 Person to unjust Fury and Violence, and tol-
 low Methods that must render honest Men
 very unsafe. The great Danger talked of, in
 the Case of restoring the Professor to the Ex-
 ercise of his Ministry, is, that of the spread ng
 of Error amongst us. I have said enough al-
 ready, to show how little Ground there is in
 that Case, to fear this from the Professor him-
 self, and as to the Fears of it from others, I
 am at a Loss to understand the Grounds upon
 which they are founded ; I have heard indeed
 great Outcries and Suspicions about the Sound-
 nesses, and innovating Humour of some young
 Divines and Preachers among us ; but as far
 as I have been able to observe, those Outcries
 are destitute of any just Ground or Foundation ;
 and as great a Plague as Error in Doctrine is,

we seem to be in much more immediate Danger at present of another Plague, and that of a very sad one, though I shall make no Comparisons, viz. a Spirit of Uncharitableness, Jealousy and Suspicion of one another, raising and fomenting Variance and Strife, Rancour and Animosity, Inquisition, Confusion, and every evil Work: And I heartily wish there may not be some Hand of *Joab* in the Cry that is raised of the Danger of Error; that it be not a Bug-bear set up by some who love to fish in troubled Waters, to amuse us, and take us off our Guard against the Inroads of that Spirit now mentioned among us: We know by whom, and on what Occasions, the Cry of the Church's Danger has been raised in other Places, and to what Purposes it has been improved. The alarming People with the Danger of Error, is a Thing exceeding popular among us, and gives the Persons themselves who do it, the Air of an extraordinary Zeal for Truth; but I have heard some on this Occasion allude to the Expressions of the good afflicted Man *Job*, to his Friends; *Job*, 12. 2, 3. *No doubt, &c.* It is to be hoped, there are others among us as hearty Lovers of Truth, and as much concerned for the Purity of Doctrine, as those who are the forwardest and loudest in giving such Alarms to the People. But were we in greater Danger of the spreading of Error than at present we are, I can see no Encouragement will be given to it, by talking

King off the Sentence of Suspension the Professor lyes under. What say some, " Will not those who are of an innovating Humour among us, see that they may safely vent the most dangerous Errors, and persist in them for a long Time, and afterwards by making some sound Declarations at the last, and when under the immediate Fears of a Sentence of Deposition, may get off." But this Representation of the Matter appears from what hath been said above, to arise from a gross Misrepresentation of the State of this Affair; and taking the State of it as it really is, may we not rather say, Will not any who incline to innovate in this Church plainly see, that they shall be so far from meeting with the least Countenance and Favour amongst us, that on the contrary, if they are but found guilty of speaking rashly and unadvisedly Words of a pernicious Tendency, however contrary to their fixed Opinion and Design, the greatest Cry shall be raised, and the greatest Heat shown against them; they shall be put to a vast Deal of Trouble, deprived of their Usefulness for a considerable Time, and not without great Difficulty, escape the Sentence of Deposition at last.

ANOTHER Piece of Danger I have heard suggested in this Case is, that of discouraging Prosecutions against Persons who are erroneous and are suspected of Error. What, say some, " Who will be at the Pains, and give them-

“ themselves the Trouble of a long and tedious Prosecution and Attendance, in order
 “ to bring Persons guilty, or suspected of
 “ Error to Censure, if after all, these Persons
 “ escape so easily.” Shall I tell you, Sir, how
 I have heard some waggish Folks translate
 this Speech. “ Would ever we have discovered
 “ such Keeness against this Man, have
 “ pushed at him so violently, and for so long
 “ a Time, and been at such Pains to run him
 “ down, if we had not hoped to be made
 “ quit of him at last.” But to give it a serious
 Answer; from what hath been said above,
 I can see no Discouragement will be given by
 the Sentence proposed to any just Prosecutions;
 and if the Assembly should do any thing
 to discourage the entertaining and pursuing
 groundless Suspicions among us, the giving
 our selves or others needless Trouble, the
 prosecuting either private Resentments, or
 ill founded Alarms too far, or the Use of Methods
 of Inquisition, I can’t see where the
 great Harm of this would ly.

SOME are pleased to throw up some Things
 that appear to them very obnoxious to Exception
 in the Character of the Man, and make these
 Things Arguments for our throwing him out,
 or at least, being very easy to part with him.
 Some are pleased to make very free; and
 some do make themselves very merry upon this
 Head: They tell us, he is but a whimsical
 trifling Man, very imprudent, and

and fond of Innovations. I shall not enter into a particular Examination of Things so very invidious as they are urged in the present Case; though I might on the other hand, and with much greater Justice, entertain you with Encomiums on his Piety, his Honesty, his Learning and good Sense, his Concern for the Honour of the Christian Cause, and his great Usefulness as a Teacher: But, pray, what is all this to the present Case; is any honest Man to regard, or be influenced by such Things, when the Question is about Right and Wrong; or whether a Man is to be censured as a Heretick, and deprived of a Station of Usefulness of which he is possessed: What kind of arguing is this, such a Man is in some Things, of a trifling Disposition; he is imprudent, or, he has in such an Instance offended me, *ergo*, he is a Heretick, or let him be made a Sacrifice of under that Character. Can any honest Man give into this? What say some, Is the Church of *Scotland* so scarce of pious, learned and orthodox Men to teach Divinity, &c? *Summary View*, P. 7. I answer, The Question is not now about disposing a Place or Chair that is vacant: In which Case, the Maxim should be followed, *Detur digniori*; so that in the present Question, Comparisons of Mr. *Simson* with others among us are impertinent, and therefore odious and invidious; though perhaps I might say, supposing the Field were open of chusing a Man to his Post, where we

might

might find one Man better qualified for it, we might, all Things considered, find many worse: But the Question at present is, whether the Things alledged as Blemishes in his Character, can be just Arguments to deprive a Man, without a Fault deserving such Censure, of an Office and Station which he is actually invested in, and which, 'till he forfeits it by such a Fault, he has a Plenary Right to. In a Word, the present Case is not a Case of Favour, but of Justice; and this Consideration may also, I hope, be of Use to over-balance the Hazard, any who are convinced a Sentence of Deposition against Mr. *Simson* would be very unjust, may be in, of being intimidated by the Cry that has been raised against those who stand up for him, and deterred from giving a faithful Testimony to the last, in a Cause, which they in their Consciences believe to be a just one; and I am perswaded, if the wicked Arts used and raised by some have not such an Effect, their Design in using them, will meet with a considerable Disappointment. But after what I have already said, I shall only desire all who have Access to act any Part in this Affair, to remember, that *he that walketh uprightly, walketh surely*, and that the deserting or dropping an honest and righteous Cause, on any by Views or Considerations, can never be honest, or worthy of a Man of Honour, not to say, of a Christian, and is seldom found safe.

